

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE : 01 OCT 2016

DAY : Saturday

DENR

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DENR told to spare Agusan del Norte in mining suspension

By **MADELAINE MIRAFLORES**

The governor of Agusan del Norte, home to two mining operations, is appealing to the government to spare from suspension the companies they are hosting because this would result to a significant increase in unemployment in the province.

SR Metals Inc. (SRMI) and Agata Mining Ventures Inc. are two of the 20 mining companies that are at risk of losing their permit to operate, based on the audit results filed by the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources (DENR) Mining Audit Team.

"We are asking DENR to spare Agusan del Norte. We are not neglecting our environment. We have our people to protect," Agusan del Norte Governor Angel Amante-Matba said in an interview with reporters.

"The problem in Agusan is the problem of the politics, that's the truth. What I'm asking to the Secretary is go down and see the operations. I want to plead to her," she added.

Matba also said that she was "surprised" that the mining companies in their province are now being recommended for suspension.

"In the copy of the audit report, I did not see anything that would really cause for an alarm enough for them to call for a possible suspension," she

"violations", one of which is use of a provincial road as a private mine road.

There is also a petition from the Municipal Government of Agusan del Norte and the League of Barangays for the cancellation of the company's Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA).

SR Metals president and chief executive officer Miguel Alberto Gutierrez already said earlier that the company will make clarifications about two issues raised by the DENR and that it continues to act in accordance with responsible mining.

"We sincerely hope for a clear resolve once all issues are answered," Gutierrez said.

SR Metals' revised mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA), which it received last year, covers more than 1,000 hectares in Barangay La Fraternidad in this town.

Meanwhile, TVI Resource Development (Philippines), Inc. (TVIRD), which holds a 60 percent stake in Agata Mining, will further delay its plan to go public after the audit result showed it is one of the companies that may be suspended for environmental violations.

TVIRD said it "has placed all activities relating to its previously proposed listing on the Philippine Stock Exchange and initial public offering [IPO] on hold" because of certain uncer-

Daily Tribune

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Lopez orders probe of 'midnight deals' involving DENR execs

Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Gina Lopez has ordered an investigation into alleged "midnight deals" involving some DENR officials and erring mining companies which were granted extension or expansion of their operations during the last days of the Aquino administration. Acting on a complaint from the Alyansa Tigil-Mina (ATM), Lopez demanded an audit of all mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA), commonly known as mining license, approved by the Mines and Geoscience Bureau (MGB) in May and June this year. ATM, a watchdog group, deplored the continued and widened operations of unscrupulous firms that violate the country's mining laws to the detriment of the environment. In a press statement, Jayvee Garganera, ATM national coordinator, said a dozen mining firms were granted extension of the MPSA by then MGB director and now undersecretary Leo Jasareno despite former President Aquino's earlier Executive Order (EO) suspending issuance or renewal of mining licenses in the country. EO 79 states that no new mineral agreement shall be issued by MGB pending the approval of legislation clarifying the existing revenue-sharing scheme and mechanisms for the mining industry. "The extension of mining licenses by MGB is questionable since it was against the order of PNoy, who was still the President at that time. Worse, some of these licenses were expansion of contract areas, meaning expanded operations," Garganera stressed. He denounced what he termed as "midnight deals" on the approval for renewal of the licenses given only a few days before the term of the former administration ended. MGB's website shows Jasareno approved some of the licenses as late as June 28 this year, just two days before President Duterte assumed office. The companies that were given extension were Sinosteel Phils. H.Y. Mining Corp. in Dinagat Island; Surigao Integrated Resources Corp., in Surigao del Norte; Chromerock Dev. Corp. in Eastern Samar, and Mt. Labo Exploration and Dev. Corp. in Camarines Norte. Those awarded with license for expansion of operations were Adhama Mining Resources Inc.; Holcim Mining; Shangfil Mining and Trading; Kingking Mining; Core Mining Corp.; Stagno Mining; Sinophil Mining; Quarry Ventures Phils. Inc.; Rapid City and Dev. Corp.; Global Mini-Met Resources; Parvisgold Inc.; Mina Tierra Gracia Inc.; Investwell Resources Inc.; Surigao Integrated Resources Corp.; Shuley Mine Inc.; Mt. Labo Exploration, and Westchinamin Corp. Lopez, in ordering the probe, wants to find out who gave Jasareno the go-signal to grant the said expansion permits.



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'Di pahihilot sa mining companies

"Non-negotiable." Ito ang babala ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Gina Lopez laban sa mga pasaway na mining company na hindi tumutupad sa environmental law.

Aniya, hindi nila pinapayagang makapag-operate pa ang mga minahan na nagdudulot ng negatibong epekto sa kalikasan.

"You have to follow the rule of law, which means the silting

of rivers, the adverse effect on farmlands, that clearly has to be fixed," pagdidiin ng Kalihin.

Tiniyak pa nito na hindi siya magbibigay ng pabor sa sinumang lalapit sa kanya para sa kanilang "business at political interests".

Matatandaang sinuspinde kamakailan ng ahensya ang operasyon ng 20 mining company dahil sa paglabag ng mga ito, katulad ng kawalan ng safety standards.

Rommel P. Tabbad

THE EXHIBENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1980

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Alarm bells sound in NY over PH gov't mines' audit

The list of problems facing Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, from a sinking currency to a stock-market exodus, just got longer. The threat to shutter about three-quarters of the nation's mines risks savaging the country's reputation among investors, according to the head of a company whose operations face suspension.

"I just came from New York, and investors are very worried about the Philippines," Oceana-Gold Corp. Chief Executive Officer Mick Wilkes told reporters in Manila on Thursday, two days after his company's Didipio project was listed among sites slated for suspension unless it fixed problems uncovered in a nationwide environmental audit. "This has done irreparable damage to the reputation of the Philippines for foreign investment."

Still, the company is confident there won't be an impact on operations from issues raised. "I can work with the secretary and the department to resolve them very quickly," Wilkes said, referring to Environment Secretary Gina Lopez. No suspension order has yet been issued.

Since being sworn in in late June, Duterte has roiled markets, embarked on a crackdown against the illegal drug trade that's left thousands dead and stoked tensions with overseas partners from the U.S. to Europe. As the plain-spoken and sometimes profane leader has made his mark, the peso has dropped to a seven-year low and overseas investors have sold local stocks. After a review of the country's mines, Lopez said this week only 11 of 41 had made the grade.

Canada's TVI Pacific Inc. is also dealing with the fallout. The

the Agata nickel mine, said the project was recommended for suspension. As a consequence of that, and the uncertainty spurred by the audit, plans to list TVI Resource Development (Phils.) Inc. on the local exchange are now on hold.

"We are certainly taken aback by the audit findings," TVI Pacific Chairman Cliff James said in a statement. The Agata mine, which employs 1,660 people, remains in operation and the company said it too is confident it'll be able to address the concerns raised by Lopez's department.

The country is the world's top nickel producer, accounting for about a quarter of global mined supply, and the threat to production has roiled prices this quarter. Three-month nickel is 10 percent higher on the London Metal Exchange since the end of June, and traded at \$10,425 a metric ton on Friday.

At first, the Philippines' main mining group welcomed the investigation, saying it would weed out operators that didn't follow standards. In recent days that stance changed as the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines said the checkup hadn't been impartial. Lopez responded this week that it was done fairly.

"The professionalism of the audit was quite good," said Wilkes, who added that most of the community around his company's copper-and-gold site was in support. "We were happy with the way the audit was carried out. We just hope that the findings from the audit, as it was done by teams on site, were carried through the whole process."

In the run-up to the results, the government signaled it was optimistic the drive to clean up the industry would actually lure investment. Environment Undersecretary

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Foreign investors worried about PH

By Andreo Calenzo

THE list of problems facing President Rodrigo Duterte, from a sinking currency to a stock-market exodus, just got longer. The threat to shutter about three-quarters of the nation's mines risks savaging the country's reputation among investors, according to the head of a company whose operations face suspension.

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Canada's TVI Pacific Inc. is also dealing with the fallout. The company, which owns a stake in a Philippine unit that operates the Agata nickel mine, said the project was recommended for suspension. As a consequence of that, and the uncertainty spurred by the audit, plans to list TVI Resource Development (Phils.) Inc. on the local exchange are now on hold.

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The country is the world's top nickel producer, accounting for about a quarter of global mined supply, and the threat to production has roiled prices this quarter. Three-month nickel is about 10 percent higher on the London Metal Exchange since the end of June, and traded at \$10,375 a metric ton on Friday. **Bloomberg**

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Marcventures confident of reversing audit findings

By Anna Leah E. Gonzales

MARCVENTURES Mining and Development Corp. said Friday the general audit findings on the company are "defensible and can be reversed."

Marcventures is one of the 20 companies whose mining operations were recommended for suspension for several alleged violations. Marcventures, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Marcventures Holdings Inc., operates a nickel mine in Surigao del Sur.

The DENR said the company had not implemented the planting of 3 million seedlings imposed as penalty for mining outside the areas covered by its

partial declaration of mining project feasibility.

The department said the company also had no valid discharge permits for its silt-ponds and oil and water separator after their expiration.

The DENR said Marcventures had no approved environmental protection and enhancement program and failed to establish a final mine rehabilitation or decommissioning plan.

It noted that Marcventures' mining area was also within the proclaimed watershed reserve.

"Pending receipt of the full report to be issued by the DENR, we can only surmise on alleged deficiencies or viola-

tions. Based on our review, the general audit findings are defensible and can be reversed," Marcventures said.

"It appears that there may have been some unintended oversight in the audit since there are matters which are yet to be acted upon by the DENR, such as the offer to provide P30 million for the implementation of the three million tree planting program, application for discharge permits and request for approval of the environmental protection and enhancement..." the company added.

Marcventures said it was confident a review of the documents submitted by the compa-

ny would reverse the "unwarranted findings."

"With regard to the watershed issue, as far as we are aware, this has already been resolved," Marcventures said.

The company said Proclamation No. 1747 recognized the prior rights of contract holders.

"As far as we are aware, we are fully compliant and have not received any notice of environmental violation. We are proud of our mine. We invite inspection thereof so we can demonstrate our environmental compliance by showing the clean waters on our rivers, causeways and berthing area," Marcventures said.



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Marcventures confident of DENR reversal of suspension order

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

Despite a possible suspension, Marcventures Mining and Development Corp. remained upbeat the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will reverse its decision after the company submitted documents against the "unwarranted findings."

Marcventures is among the 29 mining firms on the verge of total suspension should they fail to explain the audit findings violations over the next seven days.

The nickel miner said it has received a copy of the DENR letter that enumerated the major audit findings and

violations.

"Based on our review, the general audit findings are defensible and can be reversed. It appears that there may have been some unintended oversight in the audit since there are matters which are yet to be acted upon by the DENR," the company said in a statement.

These include the offer to provide P30 million for the implementation of the three million tree planting program and application for discharge permits for the silt-ponds and oil and water separator.

Marcventures also emphasized it still awaits the approv-

al of the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Program (EPEP) and Final Mine Rehabilitation and/or Decommissioning Plan (FMRDP), which is one of the DENR's ground for its suspension.

The company also countered claims its mining area is within proclaimed watershed reserve, saying Presidential Proclamation 1747 issued in 2009 is subsequent to its mineral production sharing agreement executed on June 19, 1992 that recognizes prior rights of contract holders, thus allowing them to operate in the area.

"We are confident that a re-

view of the documents submitted by MMDC will reverse the unwarranted findings," it said.

"As far as we are aware, we are fully compliant and have not received any notice of environmental violation," Marcventures added.

The mining firm is a wholly-owned subsidiary of listed Marcventures Holdings Inc. and holds a MPSA covering an area of 4,799 hectares in Cantilan, Surigao del Sur.

To date, Marcventures has done exploration work on 1,659 hectares and has performed mining operations on 125.15 hectares on its MPSA covered area.

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Call for proper waste disposal renewed

BY RESTITUTO A. CAYUBIT

TACLOBAN CITY - The Department of Environment and Natural Resources office in Region 8 (DENR-8) is urging the people in Eastern Visayas to practice proper waste disposal.

DENR Regional Director Leonardo R. Sibbaluca told reporters on Friday during the culmination activities for National Clean-up Month that the people must learn to segregate their garbage into recyclables, bio-degradable, and non-biodegradables.

Sibbaluca said that an information campaign conducted in September by DENR regional office focused on proper garbage disposal.

He said that in Eastern Visayas, the clean-up activities held on September 17 was spear-

headed by the DENR-8 in collaboration with the local government units, civil society groups/non-government organizations, the private sector, academe and the religious sector.

The volunteers cleaned up schools, parks, roads, creeks, sewage systems, creeks and rivers. "We encouraged our people in joining the activity and the turn-out was overwhelming," Sibbaluca said.

The clean-up campaign is also a way to boost the spirit of volunteerism, he said. "We stepped up our approach for a clean environment by adopting the ridge-to-reef mechanism wherein we do not only clear our coastal zones, rivers and creeks of wastes and debris but also the mountains and watersheds down to our communities in the lowland areas," he said.

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Ilocos Norte first coal-free province

LAOAG City, Ilocos Norte – Coal mining has seen better days here after local officials have approved a resolution declaring Ilocos Norte as the country's first-ever coal free province.

The move was Ilocos Norte's way of showing support to the national government's commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) through the Conference of Parties 21 (COP21) to reduce carbon emissions by 70% from expected levels in 2030.

Authored by environment committee chairman Mariano Marcos III, the resolution has declared Ilocos Norte as a "clean, green and coal-free province."

The board encouraged all two cities and 21 municipalities of the province to refrain from issuing coal permits. **(Freddie G. Lazaro)**

Ilocos Norte, PH's first coal-free province

By **FREDDIE G. LAZARO**

LAOAG CITY, Ilocos Norte — Provincial officials approved recently a resolution declaring Ilocos Norte as the first coal-free province in the country.

This development serves as a testament to the province's support for the national government's commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), through the Conference of Parties 21 (COP21), to reduce carbon emissions by 70% from expected levels by 2030.

In its 7th regular session held last August 15, the Sangguniang Provincial Board unanimously approved Provincial Resolution No. 017-2016, authored by environment committee chairman Mariano Marcos III, declaring Ilocos Norte as a "clean, green and coal-free province."

The resolution, approved by Governor Imee Marcos on Aug. 22, 2016, also seeks the elimination of coal from the province's power supply.

"No office or instrumentality of the provincial government of Ilocos Norte shall issue any permit, authorization, endorsement or any expression of support to the development of coal projects in the province," the resolution said.

The board encouraged all 21 mu-

nicipalities and the two cities of the province to refrain from issuing coal permits.

The resolution was backed by environmental advocacy groups, as well as the province's largest electric companies. It also makes Ilocos Norte

requirement from clean or renewable energy.

With a 283-MW installed wind energy capacity as of 2015, Ilocos Norte is already dubbed the undisputed wind energy capital of the Philippines. Since 2010 local government initiatives have paved the way for Ilocos Norte to become home to the 150-megawatt (MW) wind-power project of Energy Development Corporation (EDC), a unit of First Gen Corp., in Burgos; the 81-MW Caparispisan wind station of Northern Luzon

UPC Asia Corp.; and the 52-MW Bangui wind project of Northwind Power and Development Corporation.

The province is also emerging as the country's — if not Southeast Asia's — renewable energy capital with the further development of the 5 MW Agua Grande hydroelectric power plant in Pagudpud and solar farms like the 20 MW solar power facility of Soleq Philippines, Inc. in Barangay Paguludan in Currimaog, and the 4.1 MW and 2.6 MW solar farms in Burgos of EDC.

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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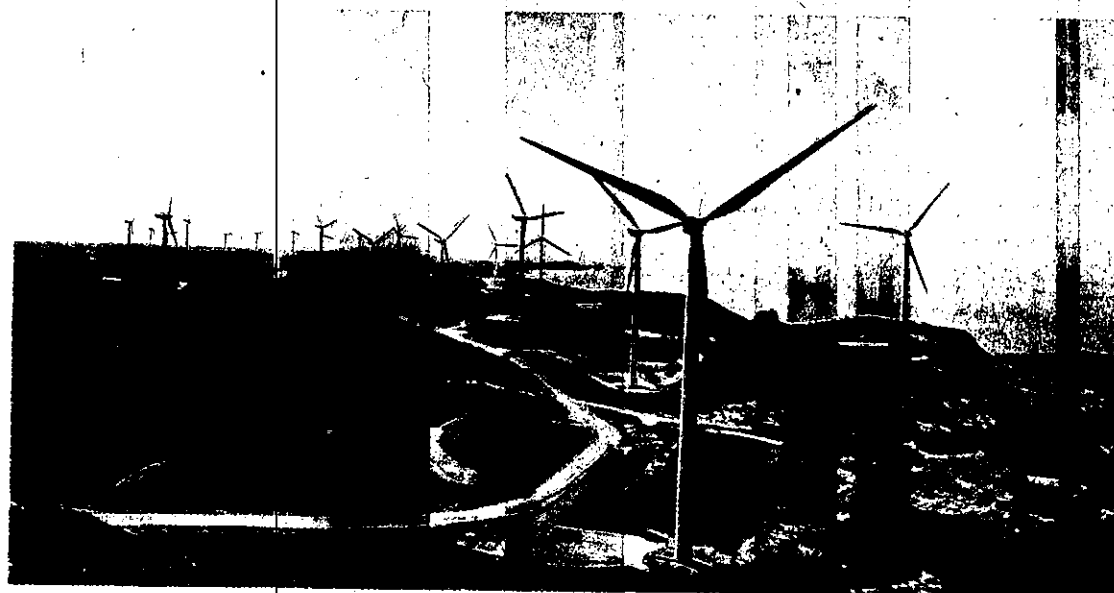
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BURGOS WIND FARM — These turbines of the 150-megawatt (MW) wind farm, developed by the Energy Development Corporation (EDC) in Burgos, Ilocos Norte, are continuously generates renewable energy supply transmitted to the grid for distribution to the country's electric cooperatives. (Freddie G. Lazaro)

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Mining clampdown yet to show impact on nickel prices, output

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By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE CLAMPDOWN on mining firms that allegedly violate laws that protect the environment is expected to have a minimal impact on nickel output this year while publicly listed mining companies that were allowed to continue operations appear to have benefited from the government move.

Global Ferronickel Holdings Inc. (FNI), the country's second-largest producer of nickel, maintained its forecast reduction in nickel output this year at about 30 percent despite the recommended suspension of 15 more mines.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources on Tuesday said these mining companies were cited for various violations including siltation of bodies of water, contaminating farmlands and fishponds, and the opposition of local governments and civil society groups to concerned mining projects.

Before the audit was con-

ducted, the DENR had suspended the operations of four nickel mines in Zambales.

Altogether, the nickel mines affected by the audit represent 56 percent of the domestic output in 2015.

"[But] the effect of the audit on nickel production will be minimal, at least for 2016, since the mining season in the Caraga region runs from April to October and is practically over for this year," FNI president Dante R. Bravo said in an interview.

"The expected reduction in output this year will still be largely due to miners holding back production amid relatively low prices," Bravo said, adding that things could worsen next year if the suspension of the mines push through.

Even then, publicly listed mining companies appear to have gained from the audit results, especially those whose operations are not recommended for suspension.

"The mining and oil sub-in-

dex (at the Philippine Stock Exchange) went up by as much as about 200 points (on Wednesday trading)," said Astro del Castillo, managing director at fund management firm First Grade Finance.

"Apparently, listed mine operators that passed the audit took the glitter [and] benefited from the rise in global prices," Del Castillo said.

At the London Metal Exchange, refined nickel fetched a six-week high of \$10,755 per ton for cash buyers, the highest since Aug. 10.

At the PSE, mining and oil was the best-performing sub-index on Wednesday with a 2.18-percent gain after falling 2.44 percent on Tuesday when the audit results were announced.

"NIKEL [Nickel Asia Corp.] carried the day," said Jomar Lacson, deputy head of research at BPI Securities Corp.

Earlier, Nickel Asia told the PSE that while the DENR recommended the suspension of

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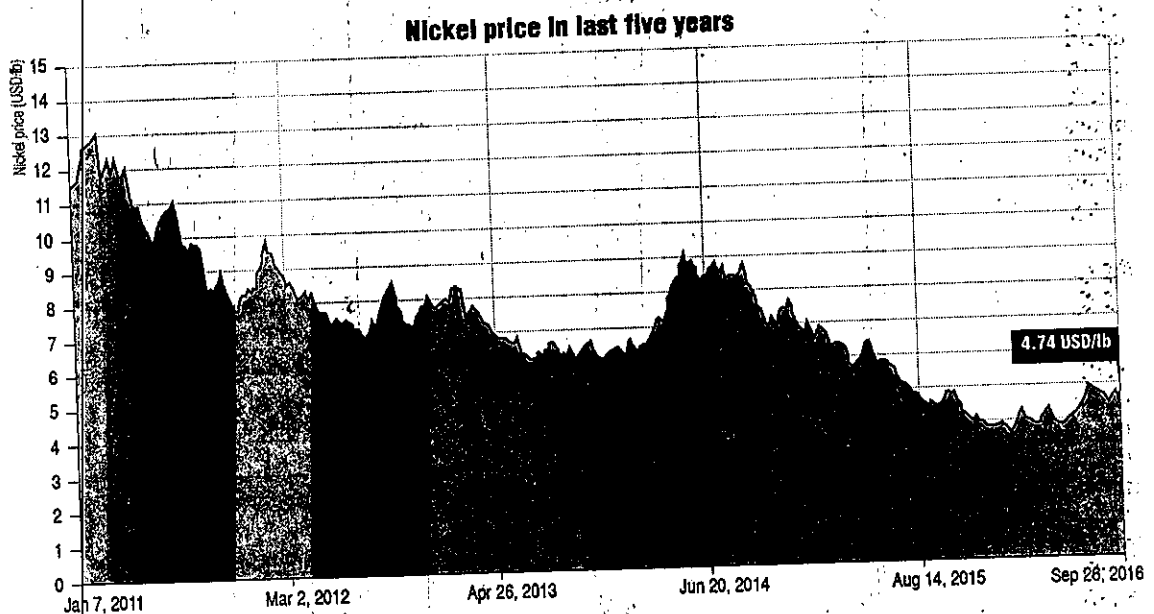
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Mining clampdown yet to show impact on nickel prices, output



Hinatuan Mining Corp.'s operations, its three other mines passed the audit.

Nickel Asia said Taganito Mining Corp., Rio Tuba Nickel Mining Corp. and Cagdianao Mining Corp. accounted for about 85 percent of the group's earnings

from mining operations in 2015.

"I suspect that the results of the audit are not yet fully factored in and it might take some time before foreign investors (show signs of the audit's) impact," Lacson said.

"Or, with the uncertainty of

the audit results no longer there, mining stocks are now free to go up," he added. "At the end of the day, even if we say that nickel mines suffered from the audit, those that are still in operation might benefit from the supply situation."

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Renewable energy can sustain PH industrialization

THREE MONTHS into its term, the Duterte administration is tackling many issues head on, including energy, as elements of its development policies unfold. This is welcome because it provides stakeholders the clarity they need to voice support or opposition to the administration's policies.

What is likewise clear is the administration's desire to steer the Philippines toward industrialization.

Energy and power are critical to industrialization. Even a cursory analysis would show that the industrial development of the world's most progressive countries were founded on abundant indigenous energy sources. Without their huge coal resources, countries like England and Germany would not have been industrial giants. Without its coal and oil resources, the United States would not have reached its lofty stature as the most powerful nation on earth.

Unfortunately, the Philippines has very limited fossil-fuel deposits and needs to import almost all of its fuel requirements. Even Malampaya gas is about to run out. Unless we impose our claim on Reed Bank, the chances of finding more natural gas deposits are slim.

But why must we always be dependent on other countries for our fuel requirements? Do we really need to continue importing fossil fuels to feed the country's growing energy demand?

We maintain that indigenous renewable energy (RE) sources can support and promote industrialization. It can be the anchor of our industrial policy.

The key to sustainable development is a secure energy supply with predictable, stable and affordable prices over the long term. A secure and reliable supply cannot be provided by imported fuels. A lesson from history is that the supply must come from indigenous sources.

The Philippines is blessed with indigenous RE sources, which can power its energy needs well into the future. Even excluding solar and

COMMENTARY

Pete H. Maniego

ocean resources which have practically unlimited potential, the country's RE potential is almost 100,000 megawatts, according to the Department of Energy. This is more than enough to support our power demand for the rest of the century.

As of the end of 2015, the Philippines' installed capacity was only 18,696 MW. The forecast power demand and reserve requirements are expected by the DOE to reach 30,189 by 2030—less than one-third of the available RE supply—without counting solar and ocean resources.

To be energy-secure and self-sufficient, the Philippines must give utmost priority to reducing its reliance on imported fuels. Currently, the Philippines imports more than 80 percent of its coal requirements, with 70 percent of it solely coming from Indonesia. Any supply ban or delay will mean massive power shortages. In 2015, the country imported 15 million tons of coal worth \$800 million in 2015 from Indonesia alone.

By utilizing its own RE resources, the Philippines will save billions of dollars in foreign exchange annually. Using no fuel, generation costs of solar, wind and hydro are stable and not subject to fluctuations in international fossil fuel prices. Hydropower and geothermal resources can replace coal-fired power plants and, thus, must be given priority in terms of permits, licensing and incentives.

Prior to the drastic decline in fossil fuel prices, these RE sources had lower costs per kilowatt hour than coal. The developments of hydro and geothermal have been slowed down by the difficulty of securing the required permits and

licenses. The costs of solar and wind power plants are expected to continue their rapid decline. Feed-in tariffs for these technologies could be phased out within five years or less.

Many developed and industrialized countries are aggressively phasing out coal-fired power plants and nuclear plants. Their target is to have a 50-percent RE share of the energy mix by 2030, and almost 100 percent by 2050. The RE potential of these countries are much, much lower than the Philippines, and their per capita electricity consumption is much higher than ours. And yet, these countries are aiming to meet most of their power requirements through renewables by 2030 and to reach almost 100-percent RE share by 2050.

Up to the late 1960s, the Philippines was the envy of the rest of Asia. Our economy was second only to Japan. Almost all of the regional headquarters of major multinationals were based here. We were leaders in political stability, economic growth, infrastructures, education, and quality of life. We were about to take off and join the ranks of developed nations. But certain events took place between then and now that brought us to where we are today. And history will be the ultimate judge of not only what went wrong and what went well in the past, but also the kind of decisions our leaders will make today.

Depending on who one is talking to, today it seems we are either about to take off again or remain stuck in the mud of conventional thinking. We are hopeful, at least in terms of energy, that the choices being considered by the administration can be weighed with a keen sense of strategy, sustainability and economic stability, and the development of long-term industrial policy in mind. Because now is the time for bold action. It's time for renewable energy to lead the way.

Pete H. Maniego is senior policy advisor of the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities.



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**MAGKAPE
MUNA
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ni Jera Sison

MATAPOS pasinayaan ni Pangulong Duterte kamakailan ang isang coal plant sa Mindanao, sinabi niya na kailangan pa rin natin ng coal plants upang tayo ay makasabay sa progresibong mga bansa sa Asya.

Ang paniniwalang ito ni Duterte ay tila hindi magbabago. Ito ay kasama na sa kanyang mga pangako noong siya ay nangangampanya pa lamang sa pagkapanungulo.

Ayon kay Duterte, hindi niya gusto na binu-bully tayo ng mga malalaking bansa upang bawasan natin ang ating carbon emission. Subali't ayon sa ating Pangulo, ang malalaking bansa ang may sanhi ng nararanasan nating global warming. Ang malalaking bansa tulad ng Estados Unidos, China at iba pa sa Europa ang nakauna sa paggamit ng coal plants ilang dekada na ang nakararaan at 'yun din ang dahilan

KAILANGAN PA RIN NATIN ANG COAL PLANTS

kung bakit lumakas ang kanilang ekonomiya.

Para kay Duterte, kailangan nating magdagdag ng coal plants upang tumaas ang supply ng ating kuryente at magdulot ng pagbaba ng presyo nito.

Ayon pa kay Duterte, hindi siya pabor na pipilitin tayo ng UN na pagdating ng taong 2030 ay maibaba ang ating carbon emission ng 70%. Tinawag niya na mga ipokrito ang mga ito dahil dapat ang malalaking bansa ang dapat sisihin sa pag-nipis ng ating panangga sa init ng araw.

Hinamon pa ni Duterte na dapat ay UN ang

magbigay ng pondo sa mga mahihirap na bansang tulad natin upang itulak ang renewable energy tulad ng solar, hydro electric, wind, geothermal at iba pa.

Subali't ang nangyayari ngayon ay tayong mga ordinaryong mamamayan na nagbabayad ng kuryente ang pumapasan nito.

Ang gobyerno ay may programang tinatawag na Feed-in-Tariff o FIT. Ito ay isang paraan na tulong na salapi o 'subsidy' para sa mga nais pumasok sa kalakaran ng kuryente sa pamamagitan ng renewable energies. Para mas madaling unawain, ang

lahat ng pamamaraan ng pagawaan ng kuryente maliban sa coal at nuclear ay maaaring pumasok sa programang FIT.

Ito raw ay upang makatulong sa mataas na gastusin sa pagtatayo ng mga ganitong klaseng mga planta. Ang nakatatawa sa ganitong klaseng kasunduan ay tayong mga nagbabayad ng 'subsidy' sa kanila ay walang pakialam kung papaano at kung saan ang katatagan ng bilyong-bilyong piso na nakokolekta nila sa atin.

Kung susuriin ninyo ang buwanang singilin sa kuryente, awtomatikong kasama na rito ang pagbayad natin sa FIT.

Subali't walang paraan man lang na ipaliwanag kung papaano ginagastos ito.

Hindi natin alam kung sino ang mga benepisaryo na nasabing FIT program. Malaki tuloy ang posibilidad na limpak-limpak na salapi ang kinikita ng mga kompanyang pasok sa programang FIT.

Ang balita ay gusto pa ng mga kompanyang kasali sa FIT na taasan pa ang kanilang subsidy. Ha?! Wala naman tayong nararamdaman sa nasabing programa. Malaki na ba ang binaba ng singil sa kuryente?

Sa ngayon, sinisingil tayo ng 12 sentimos kada kWh na gusto nilang itaas ng 20 sentimos. Mukhang maliit yan

Hindi ko sinasabi na huwag tayong gumamit ng renewable energy. Sang-ayon ako ryan, subali't palagay ko ang mga nagsasabing marumi at nakasisira sa kalikasan ang coal plants ay dapat din unawain ang kasalukuyang estado ng ating ekonomiya.

Ang mga makabagong planta ay hindi kasindumi ng mga lumang coal plants na tumatakbo ngayon sa ating bansa.

Marahil ang mga grupong tutol sa coal plants ay bigyang pansin din ang mga bus, trak, motorsiklo at dyip na bumubuga ng maitim na usok. Isuma-tatal ninyo 'yan at sigurado ako na mas marumi at mas mataas pa ang carbon

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Tribal group backs suspension of 20 mining firms

THE tribesmen's federation Kalipunan ng mga Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas (Katribu) is backing the recommendation of Environment Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez to suspend 20 mining companies following an audit of their operations.

Aside from Katribu, the Scrap Mining Act of 1995 Network also lauded Lopez, who had been going hammer and tongs against mining companies for many years. "We appreciate the fact that the list includes several companies that are responsible for the wanton destruction of tribal ancestral lands and pollution of rivers in Northern Luzon," Katribu said.

"However, we urge Secretary Gina Lopez and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources [DENR] to also suspend and immediately stop the operations of several more for the disasters caused by their mining activities," the group added.

"Secretary Lopez and the DENR in their audit and decisions should highlight the violations of tribesmen's collective rights and how large-scale mining endangered the lives and livelihood of farmers and indigenous peoples [IP]. Most of these mining companies violated and continue to violate the right to self-determination of indigenous peoples. Most of these mining companies were able to operate without securing the genuine consent of IP groups and communities," Katribu added.

Scrap Mining Act of 1995 Network has been established in response to the growing call to repeal the Philippine Mining Act of 1995.

It seeks the enactment of a new mining law that respects the rights of the indigenous peoples, protects the environment, upholds the national patrimony and aims to reorient the mining industry toward developing national industrialization.

"The present Philippine Mining Act of 1995 and government policies on mining follow a colonial pattern, where all our minerals are extracted and exported to industrialized and powerful countries instead of having a mining industry that supports the genuine industrialization, rural modernization and building a self-sufficient economy. Tribal rights are violated and lives lost with the kind of mining that the government continues to promote. Economic displacement and loss of livelihood occur whenever mining operations take place in indigenous communities. Legitimate opposition to large-scale mining operations face the brutality of company private guards and the state security forces," Katribu said. *Marvyn N. Benaning*

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Domogan wants cement plant closed

BAGUIO CITY—Mayor Mauricio Domogan ordered the local government departments to study the environment and health hazards posed by the controversial Camp 7 cement batching plant that may justify its closure.

Domogan told the department heads that he had been receiving numerous complaints from residents living near the batching plant. The residents claimed the dust from the plant caused upper respiratory tract infection, while the noise dis-

turbs the peace and caused sleepless nights and anxiety.

"It is true that the court declared the anti-batching plant ordinance as unconstitutional and that the case is still pending before the Court of Appeals," Domogan stressed.

A city council ordinance prohibited the operation of cement batching plants in Baguio, saying they harm the health of the people and the environment, but a local court declared the measure was unconstitutional.

Domogan instructed the City Environment and Parks Management Office, the City Building and Architecture Office, the City Health Services Office, the City Permits and Licensing Division and the Baguio City Police Office to check whether the operator of the cement batching plant complies with existing rules and regulations against health and environment hazards. He also told them to inspect its business, building and occupancy permits.

He asked the concerned of-

fices to recommend actions that would lead to the closure of the cement batching plant.

The mayor urged the affected residents to firmly support their complaint against the continuous operation of the batching plant so the concerned departments will have sufficient basis for recommending its closure.

The batching plant, owned by a wealthy Chinese businessman, is also allegedly encroaching on a portion of a nearby river. **Dexter A. See**

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Miners asked to help address rural poverty

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA [@jonlmayuga](#)

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez is urging mining companies to support the government's antipoverty programs and implement programs that can generate employment, livelihood and spur economic activities in their host communities.



LOPEZ: "There are people who benefit, but [there are] many others who don't and suffer. And they fight with each other. That's the most painful—when the presence of a business interest creates social fissure."

Lopez made the call during a meeting with officials and representatives of mining companies at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Social Hall on Thursday, two days after announcing the mine audit results.

Thirty of the 41 mining operations have been recommended for suspension by the audit teams for various violations of environmental and mining laws based on a criteria that includes environmental, social and biodiversity considerations, on top of the physical or technical aspect in mining.

The DENR and mining companies agreed to work together to ensure that mining redounds to the common good and improves lives of Filipinos, especially in communities that host mining operations.

The DENR chief is introducing an integrated area-development approach to create "mini economic zones" that can generate employment, livelihood and income-generating activities in communities where mining communities operate to address poverty.

To do this, Lopez wants mining companies to strengthen their partnership with civil-society organizations (CSO) and community-based groups to host

effits the most number of people."

Lopez noted that in the case of mining, its benefits have been limited. Worse, she said, mining has been causing "social fissure" in communities.

"There are people who benefit, but [there are] many others who don't and suffer. And they fight with each other. That's the most painful—when the presence of a business interest creates social fissure," she said.

According to Lopez, the meeting with mining officials or their representatives aims "to move forward and work together for the country's good."

"I reiterate sincerely and emphatically, I want to help you [the mining industry] make things right and be on the positive side," she said. During the meeting, Lopez also presented the total economic valuation (TEV) framework, which she described as a "fair and scientific way to make decisions based on monetary evaluation."

She encouraged them to use TEV to identify and quantify the major environmental impacts of mining and, from there, decide which programs to implement in their areas.

Lopez cited the social development and management program of mining companies as one that can make significant socioeconomic impact if the money is used to create economic activities for communities under the DENR's area-development approach.

"What if in the areas where you are, we ensure an area-development approach, wherein your SDMP money is utilized in the best of ways with great social and economic value," she said. "I can work with you there, in such a way that the entire area where you are be-



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Cloud seeding kailangan sa Pantabangan

PANTABANGAN, Nueva Ecija - Sa kabila ng tatlong magkakasunod na bagyong pumasok at nanalasa sa North Luzon, bahagya lang na tumaas ang water level sa Pantabangan Dam.

Ito ang nabatid ng *Balita* mula kay Engr. Olympio Penetrante, hepe ng water management core ng Upper Pampanga River Integrated Irrigation System (UPRIIS), sinabing hindi sumapat ang mga pag-ulan para mapataas ang tubig sa Pantabangan Dam at mapatubigan ang kabuuang 113.74 na ektaryang bukirin sa probinsiya.

Sa kasalakuyan, may 5,000 ektaryang bukirin pa lang ang napag-aanihan at higit na mas kailangan ang mataas na water level sa dam para mapatubigan ang may 110,000 ektaryang bukirin para sa susunod na season cropping, o "Palagad", na magsisimula sa mga susunod na buwan.

Kaugnay nito, hinihiling ng pangasiwaan ng UPRIIS sa National Irrigation Administration (NIA) na magsagawa ng cloud seeding, partikular sa watershed area ng Pantabangan.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

SWIMMING AGAINST THE CURRENT

Forests are 'forever'



By JESUS P. ESTANISLAO

BUTUAN is not only "The Timber City"; it is also "The Premier Forest City." The first banks on forest resources, which have to be renewed regularly, for eventual harvesting and industrial use (the production zone), while the second aims at having a permanent forest cover for the city and its environs (the protection zone). In both cases, Butuan is called upon to ensure that trees are in it for keeps.

Trees (falcatta) planted for the production zone, especially at the start, are not easily visible to city residents: They tend to be planted in far-off barangays, distant from the city center. In order to give more concrete and visible face to the city's governance program, it

has become necessary, therefore, to have trees planted in pocket forest parks: these are "purposely (put up) in strategic locations in order to create awareness and inspiration for the varied sectors of the community." The grand scheme, as worked out with the city's Multi-Sector Governance Coalition (MSGC), is to have these pocket forest parks "scattered (throughout the city and then to have them) connected with each other, (such that) by the time the 8 kilometers of city waterways will all be lined up with planted tree species, a new City Greenbelt will take form."

There is a practical economic drive behind the greening of Butuan: It wants to be attractive to tourists and to become a MICE destination (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibits). In addition, these forest parks within

the city would have educational value: To help "educate the masses on the value of trees in the eco-system" and to inculcate the idea of "protecting and conserving the forest reserve for its educational and tourism value." If in the process, these forest parks could also assist in the development of SMEs that serve tourists and provide a "venue for recreation and family bonding," so much the better!

- With the assistance of several members of the city's MSGC, the City of Butuan in close cooperation with PhilHealth is now developing the first of such forest parks. This is conveniently located close to the airport (thus visible to air travellers). Some eight hectares have been reserved for a site that is being planted to more perennial and endemic trees along with four facilities: a

Women's Center for Development and Training; an area reserved for Fitness, Rest, and Relaxation; Forest Parks and Playground Development; and a small area for Business and Commercial Facility Development. In other words, it is being set up as a modern forest park; and its target date of completion is 2018.

- In addition to another forest park within the Caraga State University, the City of Butuan is also working with other national government agencies in setting up the Bood Promontory and Ecological Park. This is an ambitious project, encompassing a botanical and zoological garden; a research center and "macro-somatic clonal nursery"; and a "bambusteam." The botanical and zoological

historical and cultural background, an archaeo-historical park is to complement a recreational park and a tourism pavilion. The MSGC and several city VACs have sought the engagement of other national government agencies (e.g. the Philippine Army and the PNP) as active stakeholders for this initiative: They have been engaged in the initial tree-planting and beautification initiatives. Since this is part of Vision 2020, the city is aiming to install most of the park's facilities before that deadline.

The key feature behind all these pocket forest parks throughout the city is the involvement of the MSGC members: they take the lead; they open up pathways: they connect with other



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Boracay Water, the water and used water service provider in the island of Boracay, has formally inaugurated the Manocmanoc Sewage Treatment Plant, its second major used water facility expected to increase used water service coverage to 61 percent in the island. The P570-million facility, designed to treat five million liters of wastewater or used water per day, is dedicated to treat mixtures of domestic raw sewage and/or septic tank effluent coming from connected households and establishments in Barangay Manocmanoc. Leading the inauguration are (from left) Manila Water Philippine Ventures president Virgilio Rivera Jr., Manila Water chairman Fernando Zobel de Ayala; Aklan Gov. Florencio Miraflores and Manila Water president and CEO Gerardo Ablaza Jr.